

**Minutes of Meeting
Grafton Planning Board
July 8, 2013**

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GRAFTON, MA.

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A regular meeting of the Grafton Planning Board was held on July 8, 2013 in Conference Room A at the Grafton Municipal Center, 30 Providence Road, Grafton, MA. Present for the meeting were Chairman David Robbins, Vice-Chair Michael Scully, Robert Hassinger and Sargon Hanna. Staff present was Town Planner Stephen Bishop and Assistant Planner Ann Morgan. Absent from the meeting was Clerk Edward Prisby.

Chairman Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed the Board of Selectmen to the Joint Meeting.

ACTION ITEM 1-A (1) - JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Matthew Often of 79 Old Westboro Road, North Grafton introduced himself to the respective Boards and gave a brief overview of his letter of interest for the Associate Member position on the Planning Board submitted to the Board of Selectmen's office. The Board members briefly questioned Mr. Often and discussed with him what his role would encompass within the two year appointment.

MOTION by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mr. Scully, to approve jointly with the Board of Selectmen, the appointment of Matthew Often as the Planning Board Associate Member. **MOTION** carried with a unanimous joint vote of 9 to 0.

ACTION ITEM 1-A (2) - PRESENTATION BY KAREN SUNNARBORG - HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

Karen Sunnarborg introduced herself to the Boards and thanked them for the opportunity to present the Housing Production Plan and review the requirements for State approval. Ms. Sunnarborg informed the Boards that the previous plan had expired and she has been working along with the Affordable Housing Trust to update the information in the prior plan, which will grant approval for another five years if approved. Ms. Sunnarborg reviewed the Town's vision, the Demographic profile along with the Housing profile, elaborating on the realistic affordable housing needs and requirements of those within the Town, specifically lifelong children growing up in the Town, the elderly, veterans, and those with lower than median incomes. Ms. Sunnarborg detailed the benefits available to the Town in meeting the State regulations under Chapter 40B affordable housing goals, noting the Town could deny unwanted Chapter 40B applications without the developer's ability to appeal. Ms. Sunnarborg remarked that the Town first needs to obtain Housing Plan approval from the State and then certification after meeting production goals, which would include annual production goals of .50% of year-round housing stock (36 units) or bi-annual goals of 1.0% of year-round housing stock (72 units). Ms. Sunnarborg pointed out that there has been significant progress with the 2006 Grafton Housing Production Plan, noting specifically the establishment of the Grafton Affordable Housing Trust to support initiatives; having the Assistant Planner as staff for the Trust; community outreach efforts; preparation of LIP procedures manual; the development of an affordable housing database; establishment of the Fisherville Smart Growth Overlay District; working with developers to encourage the production of units, development of a housing brochure; the

purchase of 30 Tulip Circle to help retain its affordability status; and designation of a Town-owned parcel at Suzanne Terrace for affordable housing. Ms. Sunnarborg suggested several useful tools regarding Planning and Regulatory reform to consider with amendments to the Accessory Apartment by-law; review of the existing LIP policy, allowance of affordable housing on non-complying lots; amendments to the flexible zoning by-laws; and adoption of inclusionary zoning. Ms. Sunnarborg also encouraged efforts to increase affordable housing development by making Town owned properties available; supporting private scattered site housing such as Habitat for Humanity; partnering with developers on friendly 40B projects; and promoting mixed-use, such as Village Mixed Use in South Grafton and transit-oriented developments.

Mr. Hassinger stated that the only time the Town has considered affordable housing in the past was with 40B developments. Mr. Carlson, Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust and member of the Board of Selectmen, expressed concerns about the inability of baby boomers to afford to live in Grafton, and noted that he considers the Housing Plan a way to provide housing for all of those people who require it. Mr. Robbins stated that there are proposals currently in place for various amendments to enhance the Zoning By-Laws which could be used to promote more affordable housing, and recommendations can be considered to find a way to implement plan requirements specific to ZBL changes. The Boards were specifically concerned with what the plan really means, noting that the affordability requirements may work in the Boston area, but that it appeared to be a no-win situation for a town like Grafton. Mr. Hassinger added that the Planning Board needs to understand exactly what the Planning Board's part is in this Housing Plan. Mr. Hanna questioned what the impact was to the Town if the Plan was not approved. Ann Morgan replied the without the plan the subsidized housing number freezes. Mr. Flynn congratulated Ms. Sunnarborg for the good data and statistics reporting and encouraged the Board not to be looking in the rear view mirror, but to be willing to make changes in the Town for those people who want to stay and live in Grafton. Mr. Robbins pointed out that creating affordable housing is not easy and the Town would have accomplished it by now if it was. Mr. Scully asked what was the highest number of affordable housing units the Town has reached from the start of the of the 2006 plan until this point. Mr. Padgett expressed concerns for having to change the zoning requirements under "Inclusionary Zoning" and asking developers for 20 to 30 % of the homes to be affordable in order to reach the State's goal. Mr. Dauphinais pointed out that plan appeared to be totally State driven with the 36 unit yearly requirement, adding that this is not necessarily the right fit for Grafton if you take into consideration the culture and characteristics of the community. Ms. Sunnarborg noted that clusters of mixed housing would help with the numbers needed. Mr. Hassinger questioned what happens if the Town wants the level of protection that comes with the plan, but after securing the plan, the Town just can't meet the requirements. Mr. Carlson explained that the plan is designed to help the Affordable Housing Trust to achieve its goals, adding that there is nothing in the report stating that the plan will change the zoning, but simply suggests zoning changes to help the Town in achieving the plan for affordable housing. Ms. Sunnarborg remarked that the plan is designed to encourage a pro-active stance. Mr. Bishop commented that the plan simply gives some direction in the terms of thinking in new ways, and by providing new incentives to look at affordable housing opportunities. Mr. Bishop added that the plan establishes that the Town supports the concept of affordability; and if the Town does nothing, it stays in a reactive state. Mr. Dowling stated this should be a simple action by the Boards that needs to be improved over time as the Town moves forward with the plan. Ms. Sunnarborg pointed out that the Affordable Housing Trust is already actively moving forward with this plan.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN VOTE:

MOTION by Mr. Padgett, **SECOND** by Mr. Carlson, to approve the Affordable Housing Plan as presented. **MOTION** carried 4 to 1 with Mr. Dauphinais voting against the plan.

PLANNING BOARD VOTE:

MOTION by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mr. Hassinger, to approve the Affordable Housing Plan as presented. **MOTION** carried 3 to 1 with Mr. Scully voting against the plan and Mr. Prisby absent.

MOTION by Mr. Dauphinais, **SECOND** by Mr. Padgett, to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting. **MOTION** carried unanimously 5 to 0.

The Board of Selectmen adjourned their joint meeting.

ACTION ITEM 1-B – CONSIDER DECISION – SPECIAL PERMIT (SP 2013-4) JOHN DEVILLARS, BLUEWAVE CAPITAL LLC, (APPLICANT – PATRICIA K. KNOWLTON, TRUSTEE – KNOWLTON FARMS NOMINEE TRUST (OWNER) – 43 ESTABROOK AVENUE

Mr. Hanna asked if the proposal conditions discussed at the last meeting had been satisfied. Ms Morgan stated that Condition C-13 addresses the proposal as a condition of approval.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna, to make favorable Findings for F-1 through F-19. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna, to make favorable Findings for F-20 through F-37, with the Findings correctly re-numbered. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna, to approve Waivers W-1 and W-2 with the adjustments discussed. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna, to approve Conditions C-1 through C-5. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger to approve Condition C-6 with the additional language added to require additional year round screening along the property boundaries for up to one year after the completion of all site work.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Scully asked who would set the completion date to start the clock ticking on the project and was told the Building Inspector would set that date. Mr. Scully also inquired about the screening of the town-owned property abutting the project. Mr. Bishop stated that the Town would hire a developer for any project on the land and the screening & buffering would be his responsibility.

SECOND by Mr. Scully. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna, to approve Conditions C-7 through C-16 with the corrections noted. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

MOTION by Mr. Hassinger, **SECOND** by Mr. Hanna, to grant Special Permit (SP 2013-4) as drafted with the findings and conditions as discussed and amended. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

STAFF REPORT

There was no Staff report.

BILLS

There were no bills to sign.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

MOTION by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mr. Scully, to approve the open session minutes of June 24, 2013 with the corrections noted. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

DISCUSSION ITEM 2-B – ZBL AMENDMENTS

Chairman Robbins stated that Bob Berger had two priority items to be considered by the Board for zoning by-law changes – frontage and the buffer zone. Chairman Robbins suggested the Board figure out what zoning issues will be pursued for the October Town Meeting in order to be able to schedule a public hearing by the end of August. Mr. Bishop added he will work with Mr. Berger to submit the draft language to the Planning Board by the next meeting for review and the scheduling of a public hearing. The Board debated the issue of medical marijuana and whether it was prudent and necessary to declare a moratorium on the issue for now, since there did not appear to be enough time to properly vet the subject. Mr. Scully stated that as a member of the EDC, he sees the potential development as a good economic opportunity, however a moratorium could start the ball rolling on the right approach with comments provided from various Boards in preparation for the warrant in the spring. Mr. Bishop noted that draft language would have to be vetted with Town Counsel and suggested he discuss the issue with the Town Administrator to see what his feedback is on the issue to see if the Town needs to put a moratorium on medical marijuana and if there is a need to regulate it by the Zoning By-Law.

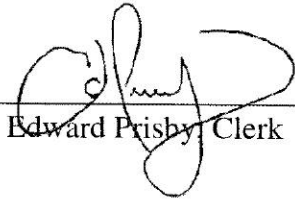
MOTION by Mr. Hanna, **SECOND** by Mr. Scully, to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION** carried unanimously 4 to 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

EXHIBITS

- **Discussion Item 1A.1: Planning Board and Board of Selectmen appointment of an Associate Member to the Planning Board**

- Correspondence from Mathew Often, 79 Old Westboro Road, dated June 23, 2013, received June 26, 2013, 1 page.
- **Discussion Item 1A.2: Housing Production Plan, Presentation by Karen Sunnarborg, Housing Consultant**
 - Slide presentation, Grafton Housing Production Plan, 8.5 x 11", color, 14 pages.
- **Discussion Item 1B: Consider Decision, SP 2013-4**
 - Draft Planning Board Decision, SP 2013-4 John DeVillars, BlueWave Capital LLC, (Applicant), Patricia K. Knowlton, Trustee – Knowlton Farms Nominee Trust (Owner); 43 Estabrook Avenue; 12 pages.
- **Item 5: Minutes of Previous Meeting**
 - Open session meeting minutes of June 24, 2013, 7 pages.



Edward Prishy, Clerk